

CHILD SAFE POLICY

Document Number: 013
Date of Approval: November 2020
Date of review: March 2024

Version: 1.2
Contact: Executive Officer

Introduction

United Way Glenelg is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero-tolerance for child abuse.

The employees and volunteer Board members at United Way Glenelg are responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

This policy applies to all activities in the organisation which involve, result in, or relate to, contact with children.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to;

1. facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within United Way Glenelg.
2. work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
3. ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
4. guide all people who conduct work for United Way Glenelg as to the action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse has occurred.
5. provide a clear statement to all people who conduct work for United Way Glenelg forbidding any such abuse.
6. provide assurance that any suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

Policy

United Way Glenelg supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers.

United Way Glenelg is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in its programs.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

United Way Glenelg is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

United Way Glenelg has zero-tolerance for child abuse. Child protection is a shared responsibility between all people who conduct work for United Way Glenelg in a paid and unpaid capacity. This includes Board members, employs, volunteers, interns, trainees, contractors and consultants.

Everyone engaging in the work of United Way Glenelg is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

AUTHORISATION

President
United Way Glenelg

Secretary
United Way Glenelg

Review Date
3 years from approval or following an incident

CHILD SAFE PROCEDURES

Responsibilities:

The Board of United Way Glenelg has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place.

The Executive Officer (EO) of United Way Glenelg is responsible for:

- dealing with reports of child abuse, including reporting incidents to relevant authorities for investigation;
- ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct;
- ensuring that all adults within the United Way Glenelg community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child as required by law.
- ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety); and
- providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.
- where the EO is implicated, the President must perform those roles.

All Board members, employees, volunteers, interns, trainees, contractors and consultants share the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and United Way Glenelg's policy and procedures concerning child protection, and comply with all requirements;
- report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and/or the state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters;
- report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to the EO (or, if the EO is involved in the suspicion, to the President of United Way Glenelg); and
- provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

Definitions:

Child means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, maturity is attained earlier.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions

deliberately undertaken to befriend and establish an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Professional is the knowledge gained by completing at a minimum the Commission for Children and Young People's Child Safe training or an industry equivalent.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds (see below) that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of, and details of, the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

Reasonable Belief

A reasonable belief is formed if a person believes that:

- (a) the child needs protection,
- (b) the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, "significant harm as a result of physical or emotional injury," or
- (c) the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

- a) a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- b) a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- c) someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- d) professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
- e) signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

Employment of new personnel (including the recruitment of volunteer Board members):

United Way Glenelg undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers that aims to:

- promote and protect the safety of all children in the programs of the organisation;
- identify the safest and most suitable people who share United Way Glenelg's values and commitment to protecting children; and
- prevent a person from working at United Way Glenelg if they pose a risk to children.

United Way Glenelg requires all workers/volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes before commencing their engagement with United Way Glenelg.

United Way Glenelg requires applicants to provide a Working with Children Check under the law, and as appropriate before they commence working or volunteering at United Way Glenelg, and during their time with United Way Glenelg at regular intervals. This will be monitored by the Board as a regular agenda item.

United Way Glenelg will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure.

Once engaged, workers/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

Risk management:

United Way Glenelg will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach. United Way Glenelg has a risk register with clear risk management controls with relevant policies aligned.

Reporting:

Any employee, volunteer or contractor who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise the EO or President about their concern.

In situations where the EO is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the President of United Way Glenelg.

Complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct must be reported to the EO and also to any external regulatory body such as the police.

Contacts:

DHHS Child Protection - West Division Intake - Rural and regional only - 1800 075 599
Victoria Police 000

Investigating:

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to investigate a report, all employees, volunteers or contractors must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Responding:

If it is alleged that a member of staff, volunteer or a contractor may have committed an offence or have breached the organisation's policies or its Code of Conduct the person concerned will be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the organisation's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action will follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

Privacy:

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. United Way Glenelg will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how their personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

Evaluation/Reviewing:

This policy and associated practices will be reviewed by the Executive of United Way Glenelg as part of its three-year review cycle, and following every reportable incident.

Authorisation

President
United Way Glenelg

Secretary
United Way Glenelg

Review Date

March 2024